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September 21, 1960

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. J. Lee Rankin, General Counsel

FROM: Howard P. Willens

SUBJECT: Miscellaneous Matters

During the past several months we have discussed on occasion the variety of issues which must be considered in the form of the publication of the Report. This memorandum will list some of those matters for your consideration.

1. The most important job, in my estimation, in the period now preparatory for publication of the Commission exhibits beginning at 24 High and extending through approximately 26 Bird. As you know, it is my judgment that due to the press of other matters during the past several weeks attention in both substance and form have been paid to the designation and description of those exhibits. As far as quotation goes, I am concerned that many lawyers have designated as Commission exhibits documents from investigative agencies which should not be published in their present form. So far as I am aware, only Mr. Eberson has subjected this problem and suggested that clearance from various agencies. I have requested that the lawyers prepare a list of Commission exhibits which they have designated which have confidential or other security classifications. Copies of these documents have been sent to Lou Nichols.

I feel we must prior to publication of these exhibits for a determination should be made: (a) Can document should be reviewed regarding the description to make certain that it conforms; (b) if the document bears a security classification, steps should be instituted to secure approval for publication from the originating agency; (c) the requested number of legible copies has to be obtained, and (d) a decision has to be made as to each exhibit as proof of exhibit-sheet as it is to be used in type or to be photographed by GPO for the exhibit volume. In order to receive the necessary clearances expeditiously, the agencies should be made officially aware of the Commission's commitment to publish as exhibits called upon in the report and the necessity responsibility of the agencies to cooperate.

2. A decision should be made immediately as to the personnel required for discovery purposes. I estimate that the job described above would alone take three secretaries and two supervisors the better part of four weeks to accomplish. In addition to this assignment, it is clear that there are a variety of other matters that will have to be handled during the next four to six weeks. I have in mind providing any necessary supervision of the control of our files to archives, the handling of incoming correspondence addressed to the Commission, the continued oversight of investigative reports, etc. I understand that arrangements have been made for Mrs. Pearl Kelley to be assigned for an additional two weeks. Miss. Douglas has expressed to me her desire to work for the Commission as long as she is needed and I think her services would be very valuable. So far as professional personnel are concerned, this is a more difficult problem. I have suggested previously that Dr. Goldberg and Mr. Hanes might be willing to remain some responsibility in this area, since I think it is clear that people to do this job will have to be drawn from the executives. The Department of Justice people, of course, will be available to discuss these matters and submit in a general way. It is possible that Mrs. Bentley might be willing to devote additional time to the work of the Commission after the publication of the Report.

3. As I have mentioned before, I think that the handling and disposal of the personal evidence which I have given by the Commission presents to be a troublesome problem. In the first place, some of this material has been supplied by its owners. Secondly, it is very likely that members of the Commission will wish to make notes on this material and the Commission and the Joint Staff should be prepared to handle such a request. I think that the Commission should take some effort to cope with such requests. Although the Department of Justice will undoubtedly be available to help in any way that the Commission feels is necessary, I think it would be desirable for the Commission to organize additionally its efforts in these matters so that the Department and supply some guidance. It would be important for the Department to know, for example, which items of personal evidence (other than the obvious ones like the photographs and the newspaper cards) the Commission feels should not be returned to the owner. Items like the diaries of the various principals, some of the written materials, etc. seem to rise an possibility more difficult questions. If the Commission believes that these items and others, like the photographs, should be made available to the public under proper safeguards, then I think that the Department should be so informed.

4. I think that some arrangements should be made for the delivery of the copies of the Report to the writers of the book and those who have assisted the Commission conscientiously in the last weeks of its work. I think it would be desirable to implement the suggestion that additional impressions copies be secured from the Superintendent of Documents for distribution to members of the staff. For these purposes I think that Mr. Dunne and Miss Cornley should be considered members of the staff, and for purposes of securing note of the hearings, autographed copies, etc., Alden Hatch have worked hard and well. Some of the non-governmental staff have expressed a desire to have autographed copies also.

5. I have instructed the mail room that effective at the end of business today all incoming mail is to be sent to the Ford office for review and disposition. I will be here tomorrow until the Report is completed, at which time I shall return to my responsibilities at the Department of Justice.